Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the second dealership is likely to be cencelled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Oil Marketing Companies as also Oil Selection Boards are under clear instructions that a person shall not be awarded a new dealership/ distributorship if he or any of his close relatives already holds a dealership/distributorship of any petroleum product of any oil company, In spite of this, a complaint has been recently received that a person already having an LPG distributorship has been awarded a Kerosene dealership in Distt. Akola (Maharashtra).

Irregularities brought to the notice of Government are inquired into and in proven cases punitive action including termination of dealership is taken.

Amnesty to Kashmiri Militants

2528. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of Home Affairs had met the former Kashmiri militants;

(b) whether some of the militants have sought general amnesty;

(c) if so, whether Government have considered granting them general amnesty; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) to (d) A group of former militant leaders representing the Forum for Permanent Resolution of J&K problem have met the Union Home Minister. They have been in dialogue with the Government since March, 1996 to seek ways of restoring peace in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. For this purpose they have suggested the need for taking certain confidence building measures, including, mainly, the review of the cases and release of persons who had been arrested and are still in custody, and other actions that could help in the restoration of peace and normalcy in the State. The Government has been responding to these suggestions in a positive spirit and based on merits. However, there has been no proposal for the grant of a general amnesty.

Diversion of Poverty Alleviation Funds by the States

2529. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the States have been allowed to use 50 percent of their annual plan outlay on the schemes, programmes and projects of their choices;

(b) whether this also includes funds earmarked for poverty alleviation programmes; and

(c) if so, the reasons for such diversion of funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI YOGINDER ALAGH): (a) to (c) The entire State Plan outlay is allocated among different Schemes/ Programmes as proposed by the State Governments. However, in order to ensure national priorities and to protect the outlay on certain important Schemes/Programmes in different sectors including Minimum Needs Programme etc., earmarking is done by the Planning Commission in consultation with the State Governments which under the present guidelines is generally restricted to 50 per cent of the total outlay. The central assistance is cut proportionately if the outlay under the earmarked sectors falls below the

approved outlay or the total expenditure under the Plan is less than the total approved/revised outlay whichever is more.

MOU between CEA and Private Sector Companies

2530. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) have been signed between the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and the Private sector companies to set up power plants in the country;

(b) if so, the number of power plants proposed to be set up by private sector, in collaboration with the CEA;

(c) whether the project reports have been submitted to Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to finalise those project reports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) No, Sir,

(b) to (e) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Slowing down of Oil Exploration by ONGC

2531. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ONGC has slowed down oil exploration in different parts of the country, stating the details of exploration done during the last three years;

(b) whether the ONGC proposes any new foreign collaboration for exploration and production of oil; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir. During the last three years, ONGC has done both onshore & offshore exploration in various parts of the country and in the process of exploration 2,43,975 std. line kms (SLK) of 2D + 3D seismic survey data were acquired and about 1431.37 thousand meters of exploratory drilling was carried out through 574 wells.

In addition to above exploration efforts, ONGC is also participating in the exploration work being carried out in various blocks/fields awarded to private/joint venture companies under the terms of various Production Sharing Contracts to the extent of its participating interest.

(b) and (c) The details of bids received under the Seventh and Eighth Exploration rounds, Joint Venture Exploration Programme and Second offer of discovered fields which are under consideration of the Government of India are given below:—

Exploration Rounds	No. of bids received	No. of blocks for which bids received
Seventh Round	12	10
Eighth Round	33	19
Joint Venture Exploration Programme	22	7
Discovered fields	No. of bids received	No. of fields for which bids received
Second offer	52	20